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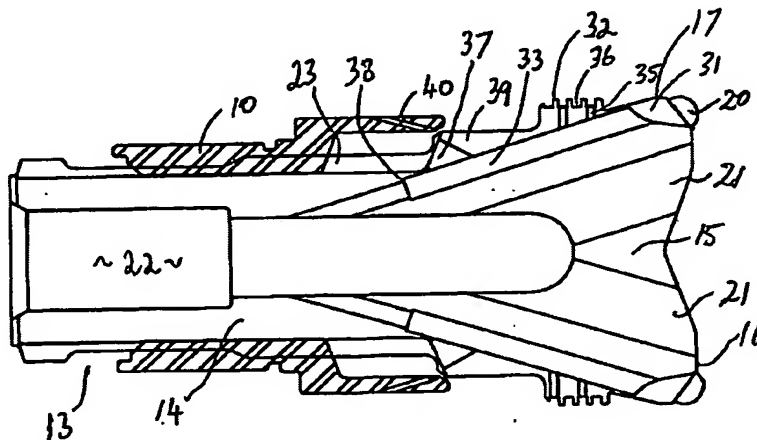
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(54) Title: **DOWNHOLE HAMMER DRILL**



(57) Abstract: There is provided a down hole hammer having a drive sub or chuck (10) having splines (11), and a drill bit (13) having a bit shank (14) having longitudinal splines (23) extending toward a bit head (15) having a bit face (16) bounded by a series of gauge row mounting portions (17), each of which has a carbide button insert (20). The bit shank splines (23) cooperate with chuck splines (11) to rotate the bit (13), the respective splines (23), (11) being proportioned to allow hammer motor exhaust air to pass down the splines. Drillings (37) are drilled from the termination of the spline milling, through to intersect with fluid passage (33) extending from sample recovery bore (22) to the bit face (16). A bore seal (32) is formed by milling a plurality of circumferential grooves (36), fed by a plurality of transverse holes (35) intersecting the fluid passage (33). Fluid passage (33) may be altered to fine tune the airflow to suit specific ground conditions, by effecting a change in diameter at point (38). The chuck (10) is provided with bleed ports (40) which direct air up the borehole when the bit is in its extended position to reduce contamination at the bit face.